Bella Coola Indians - Chapter I

BTA-0054/007 (03)

Chapter I

LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT

LOCATION

"Bella Coola" is the common designation of these Indians who, until a few years ago, inhabited the valley of the Bella Coola River in central British Columbia. As Boas has recorded,[1] the name is a mis-pronunciation of Bɬxula,[2] a Kwakiutl word of doubtful origin which white pioneers assumed to be the appelation of the people in question. There is no term in their own language to include the groups treated in this monograph. Linguistically, the Bella Coola form an isolated island of Salish-speaking people, separated from others of the same stock by tribes of Athapascan and Kwakiutl lineage[3]. Culturally, they belong to the central section of the North Pacific coast area[4].

The Bella Coola River rises among the mountainous uplands of central British Columbia. Its two main branches fall rapidly, about forty-five miles from the sea, into two deep gorges which unite, some five miles farther on, to form the valley of the Bella Coola. Down this the river rushes in serpentine curves. (See Plate 5) Too shallow and too rapid for the use of large boats, even if such had been known to the Bella Coola, it serves to bear their dug-out canoes, each hewn from some mighty cedar. The valley is never wider than two or three miles and is hemmed in by lofty snow-capped mountains. From each pocket between these mountains an ice-cold affluent comes swirling down to the main river. The predominant

1. The Mythology of the Bella Coola Indians; Mems of the Am. Mus. of Nat. Hist. vol. II, p. 26, 1898. Repeated reference will be made to this work, and when Boas is quoted without further description, it will be from this memoir.
2. Pronounced Bɬxwɬla by a Kimsquit man endeavouring to quote a Kwakiutɬ.
3. Boas, p. 26. 4. The American Indian, Clark Wissler, second edition,

tree in the river valleys is the cedar[$] which in many cases attains great girth and height. Cottonwoods flourish in places, and everywhere there is an almost impenetrable undergrowth of Devil's Club, berry bushes and other shrubbery of almost tropical density. On the lower slopes of the mountains, moss-festooned pines and spruces are the most common trees, gradually becoming smaller and fewer until the barren peaks are reached. The mountains rise to precipitously that their snowcaps and glaciers seem to overhang the valley, a narrow ribbon of green winding far below. The range of vision from the bank of the river is limited by the all-encircling mountains. Here and there a distant vista opens up to expose peak after peak, but on the whole there is a feeling of confinement, in contrast with the open wastes of the upper country where the Bella Coola rises. Mountains, forests, flowing water, these are the three dominant impressions of the country (See Plate 6).

The animals of central British Columbia, although comparatively common, have never been of primary importance. The marten, the wolverine, the lynx, and bears, both black and grizzly, were formerly hunted for their skins to serve as cloaks. Deer were killed whenever possible, but formed a negligible item of diet. The beaver also was prized for its flesh. The skins of moose and caribou were traded from the Carrier Indians, but neither of these animals was found in Bella Coola. The animal of greatest economic importance was the mountain goat, the wool of which was woven into blankets. Smoked goat meat was formerly found in every house and was almost the only flesh available during the winter. Small game was abundant, but seals were a luxury. Neither were birds of great importance to the Bella Coola. Members of the tribe

New York, p. 227, 1922
$. Appendix B contains a glossary of the scientific names of the flora and fauna mentioned in this monograph.

resident near the seacoast used to kill quantities of ducks and geese and the inhabitants of the inland villages sometimes made hunting expeditions to the nesting places of wild-fowl in the lakes of the interior uplands. Although ~~vast~~ numbers of birds were sometimes killed in this way, they were never a steady article of diet. The same is true of grouse. Always plentiful, these birds were commonly killed, but never in large numbers.

The basis of the food supply was fish. The river teemed with salmon, which enabled the country to support its relatively large population. Spring, sockeye, hump-back, dog, and cohoe salmon, all entered the river in thousands during the spring and summer, while the steel-head could be caught throughout the year. They were taken in weirs and their flesh smoked for winter use. Throughout the year, salmon was the principal article of diet. Second only in importance was the olachen, a fish somewhat resembling a herring, which entered the river in great numbers during April or May. They were taken in purse-like nets[1], allowed to rot for ten days or two weeks and then boiled. The grease was skimmed off and kept indefinitely to be used as a relish for other foods. It was always a sign of poverty if a person were obliged to eat berries without olachen grease. Trout and bull-heads were found in the river, but were not sufficiently plentiful to be of importance.

Although no form of agriculture was practised, the Bella Coola depended on the vegetable kingdom for much of their sustenance. Berries were abundant; some were eaten raw, but many more were pounded into a pulpy mass and dried in the sun. Cakes prepared in this way kept indefinitely and formed one of the regular winter

1. See Appendix A.

foods. The bark of the hemlock and cottonwood was eaten, as well as the roots of many plants. In recent years many of these articles of food have not been used, so that an investigator is apt to overlook their great importance in early times. Although useless for food, the cedar was the corner-stone of Bella Coola material culture. From its trunk were split out, with wedges, the wide planks which formed their houses. Dishes, benches, cooking-boxes, cradles, totem-poles, canoes, all were carved from this wood. The bark was woven into baskets, and when dyed formed the most common ceremonial decoration.

Even within the forty miles of the river valley formerly occupied by the Bella Coola there are considerable variations in climate. At the mouth of the river the typical Pacific coast type is found, without great extremes of temperature and with much rain, especially in winter time. During winter, the moisture is precipitated as snow a few hundred feet above the valley, and the limit of the snow can be watched ~~from day to day as it~~ on the mountain slopes, rising or falling a few feet from day to day. Farther up the valley, the winters are colder and in many cases snow lies for weeks on the ground, and in the upper part of the Bella Colla area the winters are severe, although much more moderate than on the upper regions immediately to the east.

What has been the history of the inhabitants of this land?

They believe that long, long ago, Älquntăm, the supreme god, caused their first ancestors to be created in his house, Nusmät·a, in the land above, and sent them down to populate the Bella Coola valley. These first people came in groups of two or three, brothers and sisters, or occasionally man and wife, each group descending, in many cases in animal form, to a certain mountain and then making their home at its foot. They brought with them animals and fish,

tools and houses, also the knowledge of ceremonial dances. In fact, they differed from the Bella Cool of the recent past only in having greater supernatural power. These first people increased with extraordinary rapidity, until each group grew into a village, bound together by a knowledge of their first ancestor. In course of time the occupants of certain villages combined, as some increased more rapidly than others, but on the whole each settlement maintained its character of being the descendants of one group of the first settlers of this world. ~~(page 48)~~

This mythological belief is a fair picture of Bella Coola life as it was when the first white man visited the valley. Mackenzie, making his memorable overland trip to the Pacific, records coming upon Indian villages at every few miles of his course. Boas (page 48) describes the way in which the inhabitants of each of these claim to be descended from one group of ancestors.

Though it is impossible to estimate the former population of Bella Coola valley with any degree of accuracy, it must have been in the thousands. There now survive ~~none~~ rather more than three hundred individuals, who live in one village on an Indian reserve near the north bank of Bella Coola River, about a quarter of a mile from the sea. ~~Sixty years ago~~ In the last century the tribe was stricken with smallpox, and since then consumption, venereal disease, measles, and other diseases of the white man have taken their deadly toll. Changed conditions of life and decay of the rich ceremonial around which centred their interests in the old days are also contributory factors in their decline. Within the last few years, however, the population has ~~at least held its own.~~ begun to increase.

Bella Coola Villages

The following list of Bella Coola villages was obtained. In an effort to learn which had been deserted in recent years, the writer always asked whetner or not a town was occupied at the time of Mackenzie's visit, an event of such great interest to the grandparents of the older people that the memory of it is still preserved. Villages said to have been occupied at that time are marked with an asterisk.

Three rivers empty into the head of South Bentinck Arm, which is about one mile in width (see Plate 7). The Bella Coola, flowing from the east, enters at the southern edge, and the Nutx̌ɛxtskwanʻe winds in from the north to the opposite angle of the head of the fiord. This stream, "The Nearest River" of the Bella Coola, so-called because of its proximity to the sea, is shown on maps at the Necleetsconnay. Between the mouths of these two is the Peʻəslɔ, a small stream rising on the northern side of the Bella Coola valley, east of the Necleetsconnay. Before merging their waters with North Bentinck Arm the three flow more slowly and there are extensive tide-flats (see Plate 8). Several villages formerly clustered around their mouths.

(1) Q̌ämeɛx: on the west bank of the Necleetsconnay about three-quarters of a mile from the sea. Nothing is known of this long-abandoned village of which even the name is uncertain. The mountain that rises behind its site is called Q̌ämeɛx, and it is supposed that the village had the same designation. Some of the older people state that there was no town, only a temporary hunting station, at this spot.

(2) Tasällaŋ, "Clear Foot:" ~~Situated~~ on the very shore of North Bentinck Arm, west and north of the mouth of the Necleetsconnay. The ~~head~~ fiord terminates in a ~~fairly~~ fairly square end, running north and south, and this town was at the northern edge ~~of the end.~~ It was built on piles and the inhabitants could ~~only~~ only step to the ground at low tide. This is the explanation given of the peculiar name, ~~which is~~ a reference to the curbed walking space. Long ago it was a large town, but was probably only occupied during the winter. In summer the people are believed to have moved to Numämʻɪc, "The Place of Flies", on the north side of North Bentinck Arm, about one mile from its head.

*(3) Älqälälx̣, "The Fenced Town", so called because it was stockaded: near the south bank of the ~~R~~ Pe·sla, about ~~one~~ a quarter of a mile from the sea, near the site of the present mission church. It was inhabited until about fifty years ago. According to one informant this village was founded by a certain Läx̣enwam, a descendant of Tiakwala, who decided to move closer to the river.

(4) Tlo'qo·tḷ, "Small Mound", so called from the knoll on which it was situated: above Älqälälx̣, and about one-half mile to the north of the present Bella Coola River. Its site is ~~pierced~~ crossed by the ~~present~~ road connecting the Indian village of Bella Coola ~~to~~ with the white settlement of the same name.

(5) Änutsqwa·xstḷ, "Labretted:" ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ The eastern continuation of the last-mentioned. The origin of the name is explained as follows:

One of the ~~first~~ people, Tiakwala by name, travelled to ~~the~~ Skeena River ~~after coming~~ who came to this earth in the beginning of time, ~~where he~~ and there saw many women wearing labrets. On his return to Bella Coola he settled at Änutsqwa·xstḷ and carved on his totem-pole the figure of a woman with an abalone-shell labret as a

~~(7).~~ It will be noted that several towns, ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ each consisting of a single row of houses, are regarded as forming two villages, ~~with~~ no visible ~~mark to show the limits of each.~~ In such cases there was ~~defini~~ [illegible] demarcation.

memorial of his voyage. Visitors coming to his potlatches named the town from this figure.

This town is said to have been one of the largest in the valley many years ago.

(?*) (6) Aimä'·ts: a small town to the north of the last, not far from the Fe·ɔsl̓. It is assumed that it was founded by a descendant of a Tlakwala named Aimä'·ts. ~~There is doubt as to how long ago this town was deserted~~. The concensus of opinion was that ~~it~~ this town had not been occupied for many years, but one informant recently dug up a clay pipe on the alleged site.

* (7) S̓tskiɬ, "What has been Divided:" On the ~~north~~ south shore of ~~the~~ Bella Coola river about a quarter of a mile from the sea, the site of the present Hudson's Bay Company's post. This ~~was the village~~ a certain village founded by Q̓eiɬ.

X * (8) Q̓omqo·ts, meaning doubtful, perhaps "Salty". This, the most populous village of the valley in the recent past, is still inhabited by one or two families. The inhabitants of other ~~villages~~ towns explain its large population by ~~through~~ marriages with slaves. This was the upper, or eastern, continuation of the ~~last~~ preceding, and the two in combination formed a row of houses stretching for three-quarters of a mile.

(9) Ososx̓kp̓ɬmx̓, "The Treeless Place:" On the north side of the Bella Coola, supposedly about ~~one~~ half a mile above ~~about~~ Aimä'·ts. This village was long ago deserted.

(10) T̓ɛɩx̓tɛɩxwtɛɬpä'·ts, "Where there is much t̓ɛɩx̓tɛɩxwtɛɬp", ~~some~~ a kind of hollow-stemmed plant: Some distance ~~back~~ from the north bank of the Bella Coola, (1) near the lower slope of the mountain, and about ~~three~~ 3 miles from the sea. It is probable that there was a town at this spot very long ago, according to the statement of one old man; ~~and~~ the numerous ~~traditions~~ repositories (2) in the vicinity also support this view.

(1) The river frequently changes its course, so that village sites now at a considerable distance from it may once have been on its banks. ~~(2) see page 11~~

preceding. It was

* 11. Sunx, "Sunny". On south side of the Bella Coola opposite the ~~last~~. Deserted about fifteen years ago. This was a fairly large town, though never as big as Qoaqo'ta. The name is derived from Sun, sunx, and there are two explanations given for it. A One informant states that the name ~~was derived~~ came from the many revelations of the Sun to the first people there; another ~~informant states~~ that the first chief, said to have been named Stältmx, erected a large totem-pole, decorated with the figure of a sun. This blew down, in consequence of which the people called their town Sunx, "Fallen Sun."

* ~~Te ka ta~~, X South side of Bella Coola River about three miles from the sea, at the end of the present bridge. ~~XXXX

~~also~~ named.

above the last. Probably washed away by a flood long ago, although traces of the salmon-weir were still visible ~~not long ago~~ recently.

17. Nuqäxmëtä, "The Place of much qëmëlta." (1) A large town long ago deserted but the river has not washed away all traces of it. On the north side of the river about one mile above ~~last~~ preceding.

18. Snut'li, "The Place of Dog Salmon." On the south bank above the last named at a place where a small stream enters the Bella Coola River; this divided the town into two sections. It ~~has~~ has been long deserted and the river has carried away that portion of the village below the creek. The name is derived from an enormous Dog Salmon which has been seen at long intervals in a waterfall near this spot, always with a water ouzel perched on its back.

19. Oqaikumx. On the lower end of the island at Hagensborg, eleven miles from the ocean. Although long deserted, traces of this village can still be seen. Meaning of the name unknown.

* 20. Nuqaita, "The Place of the Whirlpool." A village of moderate size, recently abandoned. The first occupant was said to have been K'aikila, which means, "The First of All." South side of the river, eleven and a quarter miles from the sea.

* 21. Asaëmëi, "The Concave Town", so called because it spread around the shore of a bay scooped out by the Bella Coola. South side, slightly above the influx of the Nusatsum River, thirteen and ~~one~~ a quarter miles from the sea. Deserted about sixty years ago.

"The Place of ~~Nuxalstlt~~". Sq'alstult".

* 22. Nusqalst, On the north side of the river, opposite the mountain of the same name. Deserted about sixty years ago. ~~Nuxalstlt~~ Sq'alstult is a kind of stone suitable for axes which occurs in the valley of a small stream on the slope of the mountain.

* 23. Nutsoux, "The Place where there are no Falls." An affluent from the north enters the main Bella Coola about thirty-one miles from the sea. ~~and~~ The ~~this~~ town was lo-

(1). An unidentified species of plant.

above the last named. Probably washed away by a flood long ago, although traces of the salmon-weir were still visible recently.

(17) Nuqāxmāts, "The Place of much qāxmāts" (the fern Asplenium cyclosorum); on the north side of the river about one mile above preceding. This large town is said to have been deserted long ago, though traces of it are still visible.

* (18) Snutsli, "The Place of Dog Salmon:" on the south bank, above the last named, at a place where a small stream enters the Bella Coola River; this divided the town into two sections. It was long deserted and the river has carried away that part of the village below the creek. The name is derived from an enormous Dog Salmon which has been seen at long intervals in a waterfall near this spot, always with a Water Ouzel perched on its back.

(19) Oqmikmx: on the lower end of the island at Hagensbourg, eleven

cated on this creek about two hundred yards above its junction with the Bella Coola. The ruins of ~~this~~ a moderately large town were still standing ~~here~~ about fifty years ago. It was at this ~~town that~~ place MacKenzie reached the Bella Coola River, ~~and it so happened that~~ At the time of his arrival the ~~town~~ population was larger than usual, ~~since~~ because the salmon-weir ~~there~~ had withstood some heavy freshets which had destroyed most of the weirs on the Bella Coola, and ~~drove~~ driven the inhabitants of other villages to Nutlex.

It is said that the affluent at Nutlex, the stream Xaiqts, is the only one in the whole Bella Coola valley that does not ~~xxxx~~ falls precipitously into a ~~vale~~ ravine leading ~~into~~ to the ~~Bella Coola valley~~ main river. Its source is ~~in~~ a spring at the ~~xxxx~~ end of a pocket-like valley, at the base of steep cliffs, but it does not fall down these. The town is named from this circumstance. The area around the spring is called Nusnäxaqxkt, and it is said that some families living on the Skeena sing of ~~this place~~ it as the spot where their first ancestors came to earth, although their descendants ~~are ignorant~~ do not know where ~~this~~ it is located.

* 24. Stuix. On the point x between the La'xalx (Atnarko) and Sla'kl (Whitewater) Rivers which join to form the Bella Coola. This, the most populous of the upper river towns, was deserted not long ago. The meaning of the name is unknown.

25. Qwliutl, "The Place of Herbage." On north side of the Atnarko River, a few hundred yards above the forks. This small town was deserted many years ago. The name was given ~~owing to~~ on account of the hill behind the village ~~which was~~ being covered with a rank growth of plants and small bushes, but no trees.

26. Snutlɛ'tl, "The Place of Falls", so called from the strong rapids of the Atnarko at this point. It was located on the north side of this river about ten miles from the forks. This large town was long ago deserted ~~at the time that~~ when a large rock in the midst of the stream, on which the salmon-weir rested, ~~broke~~ was carried away. (1)

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(1) This explanation may be legendary.

The ~~two~~ following villages may be included with the above.

27. ~~Asl[illegible]~~. On the west bank of the Necleetsconnay, about three quarters of a mile from ~~the~~ sea. This village ~~was~~ long ago deserted, ~~indeed there~~ is doubt ~~concerning~~ its very name. No meaning ~~known~~.

(27) ~~28~~. Nusxeq: ~~On~~ the shore of North Bentinck Arm, to the east of the creek that flows into it at Green Bay. This long-deserted village was built so close to the ocean that ~~hixx~~ high tides reached almost to the houses. According to one informant, the name was derived from that of the first chief sent down from above to that spot; ~~while~~ while another ~~man~~ ~~derived~~ connected it, etymologically, ~~from~~ with Nusx, the name of the ~~dixxxx~~ barren district some ~~four and one half~~ 4½ miles up the valley of the creek. ~~(1).~~ In recent years this village site ~~was~~ has been only used as a summer camp.

write out distances

The name given to ~~the~~ the Bella Coola valley is Nuxälk; that given to the inhabitants of the valley, excluding those of villages ~~numbered~~ no. 27 ~~and 28~~, is Nuxälk~~mx~~.

Two ~~questions~~ points must be considered with regard to the above list of towns: ~~Firstly~~, In the first place, can it be regarded as an accurate list, or do the towns belong to the realm of ~~xxxxxxx~~ mythology? ~~And~~, ~~Secondly~~, In the second place, are the customs and beliefs of the inhabitants of the different towns sufficiently similar ~~that they can~~ to be described without reference to ~~the~~ differences local?

The first question is difficult to answer. ~~There is no question that~~ The Bella Coola ~~consider~~ undoubtedly believe in the existence of these towns, ~~to be historical facts~~, but so do ~~the~~ they regard the peopling of the earth by men created in the land above. ~~The writer~~ However nevertheless, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ although ~~believes~~ the above list appears to be substantially correct. The Bella Coola, now collected into a single village, still remember their ancient homes. One ~~informant~~ man,

(1). ~~See page~~ [illegible]. (2). Boas, page 49, states that Nuxälk is only applied to the ~~p~~ower villages of the valley. All the writer's information was contrary to this view.

for example, stated as a matter of course that he was a man of Snutɔ̀li. Further inquiry elicited the information that he had been born at Sɛnxɬ, where his father had moved at the time of the small-pox epidemic. It later appeared that my informant's father was born at Tɛɛmɔ̀tɬ, had married there, and that it was his father who had moved from Snutɔ̀li. My informant's grandchildren regard themselves as Snutɔ̀li boys, and their names are embodied in myths of that village, although their forebears have not lived there for five generations. There is no reason to suppose this case exceptional. Other instances were obtained of movements of people from one village to another at earlier times, and there seems no cause to doubt the general accuracy of these. Names embodied in the origin myths of different towns are held as prerogatives and have been potent factors in keeping their memory alive. Uncertainties and inaccuracies there must be in the foregoing list, but on the whole it appears to be fairly reliable, since few contradictions were received from different informants.

Accounts obtained of the same ceremonies from the descendants of people of different villages were found in most cases to be identical. There were a few differences in custom between the people of Sɛnxɬ and those of the other upper valley towns on the one hand, and the inhabitants of the lower valley on the other. These will be mentioned when necessary, but on the whole the inhabitants of the Bella Coola valley can be considered as a tribal entity.

Boas[1] gives a list of Bella Coola towns which agrees fairly well with the above. Among his villages are included Nɔ'ɔ̀ɬɔ, (no. 4), Nutxɛxtsɛwan'e (no. 7), and Nuɬàtsɛm (no. 16)[2]. All the older people agreed that these are the names of streams, though settlements located on them may have been known by the same designations. Names of the five villages recorded by Boas, Nos. 6,8,9, 13 and 24, were not known by several old men questioned on the subject.

The villages of the Bella Coola valley did not form a political unit; each was independent. A common language was spoken throughout and the inhabitants of the different towns recognized that their

1. Page 48. 2. Using in each case the spelling of this monograph.

origins and customs were similar. This was also recognized to be the case with regard to the people living on South Bentinck Arm, and at the head of Dean Channel. The writer interviewd Indians from both of these areas and is convinced that, except for minor details in certain beliefs, their customs were identical with those of the Bella Coola valley people. Accordingly, in this monograph, the term "Bella Coola" will be taken to mean the inhabitants of not only that valley, but of South Bentinck Arm and the head of Dean Channel as well. It will be convenient to refer to the people of ~~the~~ South Bentinck Arm as Täl·io people, the Bella Coola ~~designation for them~~, and to those of Dean Channel as Kimsquit ~~people~~, the name by which they are generally known. It is an anglicized form of the word Kunxkwit, meaning "Canyon" by which the Bella Bella designate the people of ~~Salmon~~ Dean River.

(no caps.) → VILLAGES ON SOUTH BENTINCK ARM.

28. ~~29~~. Sätlia. On east side of South Bentinck Arm, about ~~one~~ a quarter of a mile from the point that marks its junction with North Bentinck Arm. Food was obtained from an ocean ~~fishweirs~~ fish-trap. Long deserted except as a summer camp.

29. ~~30~~. Qunkulst, "Island." East side of South Bentinck Arm, slightly north of the island ~~that~~ ~~is~~ opposite the Hot Springs on the west side of the fiord. The town took its name from the island. The inhabitants ~~used to~~ lived immediately opposite ~~the island~~ it, at a place where they had an ocean salmon-trap; and in winter moved to a fortified spot at the base of a mountain slightly further to the north. This village was blotted out by a landslide one spring long ago, and the few survivors ~~being~~ were unable to re-establish it.

* (1). 30. Tsaoltmem. On the east side of the fiord about four miles above the last-named. A small town, ~~in which the~~ whose inhabitants ~~were supported on~~ lived on the spoil from their ocean fish-trap; not long deserted.

(1). Mackenzie did not visit either South Bentinck Arm or Kimsquit, but it will be convenient to continue the use of asterisks to mark those towns which are said to have been inhabited at that time.

(31) ~~32~~. K̓xdis, "Ocean fish-trap:" On the east side of South Bentinck Arm, about a quarter of a mile from ~~the~~ Nuk̓^{w} River. It is doubtful whether this was a town, or merely a camping place ~~used by~~ of the people of Nuk̓^{w} when using their salmon-trap. ~~These~~ Ocean fish-traps work ~~on the~~ as follows: ~~Sites~~ Site. A pen is made by a series of stakes, into which the salmon enter at high tide. It is then closed and, as the falling tide lays bare the mud, the imprisoned fish can be scooped out by hand or in hand-nets.

*(32) ~~33~~. Nuk̓^{w}: ~~A large town~~ on a raised mound on the south side of the mouth of ~~the~~ Nuk̓^{w} River, which enters the head of South Bentinck Arm from the east. The meaning ~~w~~ is unknown. This was a populous town until the inhabitants were decimated by the epidemic of small-pox.

*(33) ~~34~~. Tal̓·io: On the west side of the mouth of the river of the same name which flows into South Bentinck Arm from the south. The location of this village was constantly changed, owing to destructive variations in the course of the river. ~~which swept away the site~~. It was formerly a large town, and has ~~only~~ been deserted only within the last twenty years. This village had another name, T̓qwantłos, "Facing", so called because its houses faced those of the town of Nuk̓^{w}.

As·cx^{w}, "At the head"

*(34) ~~35~~. ~~Qwapx~~. At the head of South Bentinck Arm there is a bay running south-west, ~~into the bay~~ and ~~fro~~ at the ~~head of this bay there~~ upper end of which enters, a small stream ~~creek~~ up ~~the valley of~~ follows this valley. The ~~which is a~~ trail leading to the lake at the head of Rivers Inlet. As·cx^{w} ~~Qwapx~~ was located on this creek, at some little distance from the ocean. The ~~meaning is unknown and is thought to be in the Rivers Inlet language~~ name was derived from the geographical location of the town. It has not long been deserted and must have been a populous ~~town~~ place to judge from the numerous ~~repositories~~ repositories.

~~numerous repositories.~~

(35) ~~36~~. Q̓wapx: On the east side of the mouth of a creek flowing into the bay at the head of South Bentinck Arm from the south. This town was of moderate size. The meaning of the name is unknown ~~and~~ is thought to be in the Rivers Inlet language.

(recaps) → villages
~~TOWNS~~ AT KIMSQUIT.

Two rivers, the ~~Salmon~~ Dean from the east, and the Kimsquit from the north, flow into the head of Dean Channel, and the ~~Indian~~ villages ~~in~~ of this area can be grouped according to the two rivers.

Towns near the Salmon River.

* (~~37~~) Anut'ɬ'ɬx, The present site of the Kimsquit Indian village near the mouth of the Salmon River. The meaning of the name could not be learnt.

37
* ~~36~~. Nut'ɬ, "Canyon". On the ~~north~~ shore of the Salmon River at the ~~head~~ bottom of the canyon. This large town was only recently deserted.

~~38. Nutsqwalt~~ 38. Äxet'i, "Occupied Mound". On south side of ~~the Salmon~~ Dean River about one mile from the sea. This small town was deserted many years ago. The name is derived from the small mound on which it was built.

39
* ~~40~~. Nutsqwalt, "Many Spawning Sockeye Salmon." On south side of the Salmon River, about one and ~~one~~ a quarter miles from the sea. A large town recently deserted.

* 40. Nusqäpts, "Place of many Spring Salmon." On south bank about twenty-five miles from the sea. This spot was not settled when people first occupied this world, but ~~was later taken possession of by~~ later Älquntäm. took possession of it.

41. Ixwink. East side of river twenty-eight miles from the sea. There is doubt about this town. ~~which~~ IT is said to have been a colony of the Kimsquit River settlement, a ~~fact which is~~ statement difficult to ~~believe.~~ understand.

42. Sawal'os, "Where Canoes are Left." On north side of the river about thirty-five miles from the sea. Immediately opposite was Sutkɬta, "Winter Trail." These two are considered as forming one town, but were probably never more than camping grounds at the spot where the winter trail to the interior left the river. It is possible that they formed a town, since the names of the alleged first settlers in the beginning of time ~~were learnt.~~ are preserved (1)

43
* ~~43~~. Äskɬta. At Salmon House on the upper ~~Salmon~~ Dean River. ~~The writer is much puz-~~

(1) see page

The history of the villages on the upper Dean is puzzling. Mythological accounts of their founding were obtained, and some of the older people stated that they had been occupied until recent years. On the other hand, there are apparently reliable traditions of Carrier settlements there. The probable explanation is that the Bella Coola formerly extended over the area, either in ~~actual~~ fact or according to mythology, but were supplanted by the Carriers.

~~The~~ Dean River is called Nutsl, and the generic name for the people of ~~the~~ the Dean valley is Sutslemx. About ~~sixty~~ eighty years ago a small-pox epidemic so reduced the villages on the Kimsquit that the survivors abandoned them and moved to the Dean. At that time a certain Kimsquit man is believed to have said:

"We will take their places and kill even their dogs."

Since that time, the joint settlement has suffered one epidemic after another, until a mere handful of the people survive, and they are almost entirely descended from the Kimsquit River immigrants. Within the last few years, these have requested permission from the Bella Coola to abandon Kimsquit entirely and live among them. The two groups have always been on the best of terms, but the Bella Coola have not forgotten the fate of the Dean River people and have been unwilling to admit the Kimsquit survivors.

Villages of the Kimsquit River, Sä·tsk' (Small caps)

(44) Sä·tsk'. This large and important town, at the mouth of the river, was deserted at the time of the small-pox epidemic.

(45) Nuxwelst. This can be grouped with the last mentioned, although situated on the shore of Dean Channel, at the site of the present Manitou Cannery, ~~six~~ 6 miles away. No meaning of the name is known.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION (10 pt. rom. caps)

~~The subject of this monograph is~~ The people of the above forty-five villages ~~They~~ will be referred to as a tribe, and as this term is customarily limited to a political unit, a brief justification for its use is necessary.

Each Bella Coola village consisted of a single row of houses, built along the shore of a river or the ocean. ~~In~~ The front doors opened out on to a wooden platform, which served as side-walk, and extended from one end of the settlement to the other. The outer

side of this structure was always supported on piles; in fact, in many x cases, the houses as well ~~kk~~ as the ~~whole~~ sidewalk were thus raised from the ground. This type of construction was necessitated by the sloping sites, ~~of the villages~~ and was also ~~but had the added advantage of being~~ a protection against ~~xxxxxx~~ attack. The villages differed in size from insignificant settlements of three to four houses, to ones with twenty or thirty, each containing several families. The ease with which the ~~R~~ed ~~C~~edar could be split and worked into large planks made possible the construction of these large, rectangular houses which, with their horizontally laid walls~~x~~ and sloping roofs, presented a picture of stability and relative comfort superior to that of most Indian habitations.

Each village ~~comprised what~~ was practically an independent political unit. Neighbouring settlements had many common interests which threw them into ~~active~~ contact with one another, but there was no organised cohesion between the towns of the Bella Coola valley, or between ~~the ones~~ three at Täl·io and Kimsquit. There was still less to draw these three groups together. There was no supreme chief and no governmental meeting of the tribe as a whole. Not only were the three divisions not bound to support one another in war, they were often at loggerheads among themselves. Indeed, bloodshed between towns of the Bella Coola valley itself was not uncommon. Moreover, each group tended to merge with its neighbours. The Täl·io people ~~frequently~~ in many cases married with the Rivers Inlet and the Bella Bella; the Kimsquit with the ʟstämx of Dean Channel and the Kitlobe of Gardner's Canal; and the Bella Coola of the upper valley with the~~x~~ Carriers.

In spite of these inconsistencies, the ~~application of the~~ word tribe is applicable to these three groups ~~is justifiable~~ for the following reasons:

A. LINGUISTIC. All spoke the same language. There were dialectical differences among the people of Bella Coola, Täl·io, and Kimsquit, but each group could understand the others. This differentiated them clearly from all neighbouring tribes.

B. CEREMONIAL. A member of a secret society in any of the above towns was accepted as a member in any other one. A person of another tribe, even if known to belong to a ~~se~~similar ~~cret~~ society, was treated as an uninitiated person.

C. ORIGIN AND RELIGION. The people of Bella Coola, Täl·io, and Kimsquit felt themselves to be akin through acceptance of the fact that their ancestors had been created together in the beginning of time. This marked them off with great clearness from ~~the Carriers of the interior in particlar, and indeed from all~~ other tribes, especially from the

Carriers of the interior. This belief formed a sentimental and religious ~~bond~~ bond of great strength.

NEIGHBOURING TRIBES.

~~It is desirable to describe, briefly, the tribes with which~~ The Bella Coola came in contact with his neighbouring tribes.

The Carriers.

East of Bella Coola, amid the mountains of the interior, roved the Carriers. In summer they often came down to the river valley to fish or trade for salmon, and in winter they were sometimes forced by cold and starvation ~~again~~ to visit the Bella Coola, Bella Bella, or Rivers Inlet people. These intermarried ~~was a good deal of intermarriage between them and~~ with the inhabitants of the upper valley, so that the wanderers were often able to spend the cold months with relatives. None the less, the Bella Coola considered these people utterly foreign in habits and beliefs, and to call a man a "Carrier" was, and still is, a deadly insult. The Carriers lacked the rich ceremonial life of the coastal peoples who, therefore, regarded them with scorn and contempt. The presence of a few of the much-despised Carriers was, however, almost necessary to the correct performance of the winter dances, since they were uninitiated spectators whom it was ~~incumbent~~ necessary to impress and delude.

The Bella Bella. (small caps middle)

West of Bella Coola lived the Bella Bella, known as ɬqwɬläsɬmx. Although linguistic differences prevented free exchange of ideas, and active hostility was not unknown, there was considerable intermarriage between the two tribes. The Bella Coola recognized the similarity of culture between them; in fact, whereas a Carrier was despised for lack of knowledge of ceremonial and dramatic matters, a Bella Bella was respected for his superior lore ~~in that respect~~. The Bella Coola realize that many of their rites have been obtained from them.

The chief Bella Bella villages are said to have been:

Qwalna; on "Kwatna" Bay;

Nä'mu; at "Namu.";

Qwiai; ~~four~~ miles from the last mentioned; ~~and~~

Nutɬm.

At Qwalna, the nearest settlement, so many of the people spoke Bella Coola that it was practically bi-lingual. There had been so many intermarriages for generations that the people were not considered foreigners.

~~people; in fact~~, Boas (p. 48) includes it among Bella Coola villages. (1) There were seven villages on Kwatna Inlet and ~~the~~ Kwatna River which flows in from the south-east.

(1) Sinulkemitl, "Where it Spoke:" a small outpost on the eastern shore of Kwatna Inlet near the entrance. There may once have been a permanent settlement at the site, but for many years it was used only as a look-out station when raiders were expected. [1] *

~~and that the settlement was abandoned in consequence.~~

* (2) Äxet'i, "Occupied Mound:" on the island in Kwatna Inlet. One elderly man staed that the ruins were still standing within his father's life-time. This village was peculiar in having separate burial-grounds for chiefs and commoners.

(3) Nulilqolänk, "Place of Many Boulders:" a large pile-built village on the shore of Kwatna Inlet, north and east of the mouth of the river. At high tide the ocean penetrated under the stagings and swirled among the many boulders there, from which the town was named. It is said that there was once friction between the people living at either end of the village, and that a ditch was dug to separate the hostile sections. The place was long ago deserted.

(4) Anutcax, "House of Tiers:" on the east and north side of ~~the~~ Kwatna River about one-half mile from its mouth. A large, semi-subterranean house with many platforms stood in the centre of the village, from which its name was derived. The place was long ago deserted.

~~(1). P. 48.~~

* Numbers in square brackets refer to notes in Appendix B.

5. Anukac'ist, "The Place of Big Stones in The River". On the same side of the river, about three miles above the last named. It was a large town in the distant past. The situation was at a place where the river was very dangerous with large boulders projecting above the surface of the water.

* 6. Wakwas. About ~~one~~ a mile above the ~~last~~ preceding, on the same side of the river, immediately above a small creek. This town was deserted at the time of the small-pox epidemic. The meaning is unknown and it is thought the name Wakwas is in the Bella Bella language.

* 7. Name unknown. The largest town at Qwalna was about one half mile above the preceding ~~last~~, where the river forks. It was practically wiped out at the time of the small-pox epidemic.

At each of these river villages there was a salmon-weir ~~from~~ which ~~the people gained their chief subsistence.~~ furnished the chief article of diet.

The ‘stämx.

~~‘STÄMX.~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Until about 1863, the time of the small-pox epidemic, there were towns on the fiords and villages of Dean Channel between Kimsquit and Bella Bella. The inhabitants were called ‘stämx by the Bella Coola, and ‘staitx by the Bella Bella. Their settlements were at Elcho Harbour, Green River, Cascade Inlet, and at several unidentified places. Their language is said to have differed slightly from that of the Bella Bella, but the people themselves married freely with both the Kimsquit and Bella Bella, thus forming a connecting link between these two tribes.

The writer obtained a list of ‘stämx towns from one old man, who claimed to be a descendant of the people. It was impossible to verify his list from other informants, and since he himself was not an ideal communicant, the following can only be regarded as approximately correct.

1. Alko. At Elcho Harbour.

2. Kilbet. On a fiord ~~three~~ one mile above, that is, approximately east, of ~~this~~ the last named.

3. Attlk or Yuqwat, on a river ~~two~~ three miles above the ~~last named~~ preceding.

4. Nuwaisäx, on a river two miles above ~~last named~~ the preceding.

(5) Nusqa~~t~~l; on a fiord ~~three~~ 3 miles above the preceding.

(6) ʾOmtlom; on a fiord ~~three~~ 3 miles above the preceding.

(7) Suxwɛlk; on a river ~~two~~ 2 miles above the last-named and ~~thirty~~ 30 miles below Kimsquit.

According to the old man from whom the above ~~list~~ information was obtained, Nuxwɛlst, at Kimsquit, ~~listed~~ recorded earlier as village No. 45, was also populated by ɛstämx people. There was so much intermarriage between the two groups that it is now impossible to ascertain whether the inhabitants not only of Nuxwɛlst, but of Suxwɛlk as well, were predominantly Kimsquit or ɛstämx.

.....

The open plateau in which ~~the~~ Bella Coola River rises has always made travel possible for long distances, so that not only the neighbouring Carriers, but Tcilkotin as well sometimes descended to the valley. On the coast, though the dense underbrush prevented travel along the shore, the long fiords, ~~with~~ sheltered from the open Pacific, were ideal ~~of~~ for the use of canoes.(1) (appendix A). ~~In~~ Comparatively lengthy journeys were ~~not~~ neither ~~unusual~~ difficult nor uncommon. The Täl·io people were usually on amicable terms with the ~~neighbouring~~ inhabitants of Rivers Inlet, and the Kimsquit with the Kitlobe. The Bella Coola were accustomed to attend potlatches at Alert Bay, Knight Inlet and Bute Inlet, receiving their hosts, ~~also~~ in turn, at Bella Coola. On the other hand there was little friendly intercourse with the northern tribes, of which the Kitkatla especially were dreaded by the residents of the central coast. Until recent years the Bella Coola had no direct knowledge of other Salish-speaking peoples, although some of the Tcilkotin told them of a tribe living far to the south, in the interior, whom they encountered in some of their wanderings and used to term Nuxälkɛmx, recognizing the similarity between their language and that of the Bella Coola. A few years ago, several Bella Coola attended a boarding-school and were amazed to find that many of their words were understood by fellow-students from Chilliwack.

To sum up, the Bella Coola were in close contact with the neighbouring coastal tribes, with the members of which they felt themselves to have ~~cultural~~ affinities. They recognize that they have received many ceremonial rites from their neighbours, and must have adopted ~~many~~ other elements of culture which they now consider indigenous. It is probable that certain Bella Coola customs must likewise have been transmitted to other tribes, but such lie without the scope of this monograph. The outlying ~~Bella Coola~~ villages were in close contact with foreign neighbours, and tended to assimilate elements of their culture, but, on the whole, the Bella Coola present a tribal entity, with customs and beliefs not found elsewhere in British Columbia.

~~(1). For types of canoes, see Appendix A.~~